

1/28/03

**To: CINMS Advisory Council**

**From: Linda Krop, Conservation Representative**

**Re: Conservation Working Group Report, 1/27/03**

The Conservation Working Group (CWG) met on January 27, 2003. Members present: Linda Krop, Chair; Greg Helms, Co-Chair; Jean Holmes; Mary Stack; Rick Skillin; Cara Weigand; and Drew Bohan.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The CWG members introduced themselves, followed by a welcome and introduction of Chris Mobley, the Sanctuary Manager.

## **II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Two announcements were made: one for the Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop on February 27, and one for the Marine Reserves Monitoring Workshop on March 14-16. CWG groups were encouraged to designate a representative to attend the Monitoring Workshop.

## **III. MARINE RESERVES UPDATE**

Greg provided an update regarding the State reserves process, including mention of the lawsuit filed by fishing groups, and the February 6 hearing by the Fish and Game Commission to decide whether to reconsider its October decision adopting marine reserves. In the meantime, the Department of Fish and Game continues to proceed with the State rule-making process.

Linda reported that NOAA is considering a delay in the Federal reserves process until the Sanctuary boundary expansion is studied in late 2004. At its January 17 meeting, the Sanctuary Advisory Council voted to send a letter to NOAA requesting expeditious consideration of Federal reserves to ensure timely adoption and implementation of the complete Sanctuary reserves network. Although the Sanctuary will take the lead in considering the Federal reserves, there will be a need for consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

## **IV. MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

Sarah McWilliams from the Sanctuary program staff reported that the draft Management Plan Update and EIS for the existing boundaries will be released to the public in late Spring or early Summer, and that a series of workshops will be scheduled to allow full public review of the Plan.

The Management Plan will include regulations, non-regulatory programs, and performance measures.

## **V. MISSION AND ROLE OF CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP**

We reviewed the mission and role of the CWG, and heard a report containing input from various CWG members as well as Kaitilin Gaffney, Chair of the MBNMS CWG. The CWG members present agreed that the primary function of the CWG should be focused on making substantive recommendations on issues facing the CINMS. These recommendations may relate to specific CINMS or SAC issues, or to issues that we may bring to the attention of the CINMS and SAC.

Other suggestions regarding the function of the CWG included: (1) encouraging more participation from Ventura County organizations by meeting occasionally in Carpinteria and/or Ventura; (2) developing a short document to hand out at CWG meetings describing the role and function of the CWG; (3) establishing CWG subcommittees as needed to help review and develop recommendations on certain issues; (4) providing presentations about specific issues at our CWG meetings; (5) providing an agenda and information in advance of the CWG meetings so members can be prepared to discuss the issues and develop recommendations; (6) strategically planning public forums to help with issue outreach and education; (7) partnering with other working groups as appropriate; and (8) identifying additional groups (and possibly individuals) to serve on the CWG.

## **VI. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION**

The agenda included a list of issues pertaining to the Management Plan, Boundary Expansion, or identified as an emerging issue. The CWG members identified which issues they thought were priorities, and which issues their groups would likely be interested in working on. The CWG members will take the list back to their groups for feedback. The issues that received the most interest from those present included:

Management Plan: acoustic impacts; military activities; vessel traffic and water quality.

Boundary Expansion: oil/gas/mineral extraction; aquaculture/mariculture.

Emerging Issues: artificial reefs/rigs-to-reefs; fishing impacts; desalination; wildlife interaction; alternative energy projects; invasive/exotic species; marine debris; and seawalls.

In addition, Chris Mobley mentioned some issues that received enthusiastic support by the CWG: (1) assisting with species recovery; (2) ecosystem restoration/essential fish habitat; and (3) response to Ocean Commission reports and recommendations.

In addition, the CWG reviewed the SAC 2003 Work Plan. Mary Stack volunteered to work on the oil spill response issue, and some groups (SBCK, Surfrider) volunteered to participate on a Water Quality Working Group.

Finally, the CWG also renewed its commitment to sponsor or co-sponsor public education forums on specific issues, the Management Plan, etc.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SAC FOR THE MARCH MEETING**

Although it was difficult to predict exactly what will be on the March SAC Meeting Agenda, the CWG agreed to volunteer certain participants for the Water Quality Working Group and engage in the Federal marine reserves process. The CWG decided to request an opportunity to participate in the Federal consultation processes, including a request for a joint PFMC/SAC meeting in the Santa Barbara/Ventura region.

## **VIII. 2003 MEETING SCHEDULE**

The CWG will meet the Wednesday of the week before the SAC meeting, as follows:

March 12  
May 7  
July 9  
September 10  
November 5

At the next CWG meeting in March, we will discuss updates regarding marine reserves and the management plan, and we will receive a presentation and have a discussion (led by Mary Stack and Greg Helms) regarding acoustic impacts.